

Street Drugs 101

SKCCH

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(from a public health/harm reduction
perspective)

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"An alcoholic is someone you don't like who drinks more than you do."

Dylan Thomas

Drug Addict:
n. someone you don' t like
that does a different drug than you do.

(The most sociologically meaningful definition, and most of what we think about addiction is sociological, not pharmacological.)

Categories of Drugs (families)

- Narcotics/Opiates
- Depressants
- Stimulants
- Cannabis
- Hallucinogens
- Anabolic Steroids
- Inhalants
- (and alcohol, tobacco, etc., of course...duh)

What we care about

- Opiates
- Stimulants
- Depressants (benzos and alcohol)

Opiates

- Heroin
- Morphine
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lorcet)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Oxycodone (Percodan, Percoset, Oxycontin)
- Oxymorphone (Opana)
- Methadone and LAAM
- Fentanyl and analogs
- Other narcotics (codeine)

Drugs	CSA Schedules	Trade or Other Names	Medical Uses
Narcotics			
Heroin	Substance I	Diamorphine, Horse, Smack, Black tar, <i>Chiva</i> , <i>Negra (black tar)</i>	None in U.S., Analgesic, Antitussive
Morphine	Substance II	MS-Contin, Roxanol, Oramorph SR, MSIR	Analgesic
Hydrocodone	Substance II, Product III, V	Hydrocodone w/ Acetaminophen, Vicodin, Vicoprofen, Tussionex, Lortab	Analgesic, Antitussive
Hydro-morphone	Substance II	Dilaudid	Analgesic
Oxycodone	Substance II	Roxicet, Oxycodone w/ Acetaminophen, OxyContin, Endocet, Percocet, Percodan	Analgesic

Codeine	Substance II, Products III, V	Acetaminophen, Guaifenesin or Promethazine w/Codeine, Fiorinal, Fioricet or Tylenol w/Codeine	Analgesic, Antitussive	f
Other Narcotics	Substance II, III, IV	Fentanyl, Demerol, Methadone, Darvon, Stadol, Talwin, Paregoric, Buprenex	Analgesic, Antidiarrheal, Antitussive	f

Stimulants

- Cocaine
- Amphetamine/Methamphetamine (Adderall)
- Methylphenidate (ritalin)
- Other stimulants

Stimulants			
Cocaine	Substance II	Coke, Flake, Snow, Crack, <i>Coca, Blanca, Perico, Nieve, Soda</i>	Local anesthetic
Amphetamine/ Meth-amphetamine	Substance II	Crank, Ice, Cristal, Krystal Meth, Speed, Adderall, Dexedrine, Desoxyn	Attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, narcolepsy, weight control
Methylphenidate	Substance II	Ritalin (Illy's), Concerta, Focalin, Metadate	Attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder
Other Stimulants	Substance III, IV	Adipex P, Ionamin, Prelu-2, Didrex, Provigil	Vaso-constriction

Depressants			
<i>gamma</i> Hydroxybutyric Acid	Substance I, Product III	GHB, Liquid Ecstasy, Liquid X, Sodium Oxybate, Xyrem®	None in U.S., Anesthetic
Benzodiazepines	Substance IV	Valium, Xanax, Halcion, Ativan, Restoril, Rohypnol (Roofies, R-2), Klonopin	Antianxiety, Sedative, Anti-convulsant, Hypnotic, Muscle Relaxant
Other Depressants	Substance I, II, III, IV	Ambien, Sonata, Meprobamate, Chloral Hydrate, Barbiturates, Methaqualone (Quaalude)	Antianxiety, Sedative, Hypnotic

Medical uses

- **Narcotics/Opiates:**
- Analgesic (pain killer)
- Antitussive (cough suppressor)
- Anesthetic
- Antidiarrheal (plugs ya right up)
- Drug treatment
- **Stimulants:**
- Local anesthetic
- Attention deficit/hyperactivity
- Narcolepsy
- Weight control

Other effects

- **Narcotics/Opiates:**
- Euphoria
- Drowsiness
- Calmness
- Pain relief
- Anxiety eliminator
- Full body orgasm
- Hunger relief
- *Respiratory depression*
- **Stimulants:**
- Increased alertness
- Excitation
- Euphoria
- Insomnia
- Loss of appetite
- Increased sexual desire/performance (yeah!)

What we're really talking about

- **Narcotics/Opiates:**
- Heroin (Mexican black tar, chiva)
- Pills
- **Stimulants:**
- Methamphetamine (crystal, crank, speed, Tina)
- Cocaine (both flake/powder and crack)

Modes/routes of administration

- **Heroin/Opiates:**
 - Injection
 - Snorting (for heroin, not bloody likely in western US)
 - Smoking
 - Oral (well, for pills)
- **Stimulants:**
 - Injection (meth, flake, and crack [really])
 - Snorting (meth and flake)
 - Smoking (crack, meth [and no, there is no “special” smokeable form of meth])
 - Oral

Some behavioral differences

- **Heroin:**
- Honey put on “A Love Supreme” ...
- Let’ s listen to The Cowboy Junkies...
- Sure is nice and cozy in this tent under the interstate.
- Wanna do a crossword?
- **Stimulants:**
- Let’s dance!!
- Wanna do the horizontal hokey pokey (heh heh)?
- Hey, I know, let’ s gut that empty building and sell the copper...
- More sex?

Chilly Clay:

- **Sex is crystal**
- **Crystal is sex**

Behavioral surveys (stereotype alert!)

- There are differences in meth use.
- Among some gay/bi men the sex=crystal equation holds.
- For straight men, sex is good, but so is welding and truck driving.
- For women, sex is good, but so is keeping it all together.

Cocaine/crack

- Heightened sex drive among both men and women.
- Trading sex for cocaine is absolutely given (even among middle/upper class users).
- Sucking the devil' s dick.
- Crack Pipe as Pimp.
- Glasgow.

Heroin/opiates

- Reduced sex drive among both men and women.
- Male inability to gain/maintain erection or achieve ejaculation.
- Trading sex for drugs common in women.

Injection differences

- Tar is hard to split.
- Backloading very common (thus much higher rates of Hep C).
- Heat inactivates HIV at low temps.
- Meth/flake easy to split (powder).
- Backloading much less common.
- No/little need to heat (even with crack).

Tar Heroin



Flake/powder cocaine



Crack



Crystal methamphetamine



Frequency of Use

- **Heroin:**
- Overwhelming majority of heroin users are daily users.
- Depending of habit size and purity, may inject 2 to 5 x per day.
- Three is average.
- **Pills;** depends on drug, dose and route of use.

Frequency of Use cont' d

- **Stimulants:**
- Big diffs:
- Cocaine injectors shoot up a lot: 20 x per day not uncommon, but very few folks can handle this for much more than a day or two at a time.
- Many meth injectors are not daily injectors -- if so just 2x day.

Frequency of Use cont' d

- **Stimulants:**
- Cocaine snorters and smokers will also do a lot...the high is just very short (maybe 10 minutes with crack, more likely 5).
- Meth snorters and smokers will do less (tend to see a lot of weekend warriors).

Editorial Alert

- Pareto principle (the 80/20 rule): “for any given activity, 20% of the participants typically account for 80% of the action”.
- Vast majority of what most people think they know about drugs is wrong.
- Especially true of media.

Editorial Alert

- Most users of addictive drugs are not addicts (exception: tobacco?).
- Vast majority of heroin and cocaine use (80%?) accounted for by relatively few (20%?).
- Rats and cocaine; Harlem v. penthouse.
- Dr. Carl Hart, *The High Price*

Injection issues

- **Heroin:**
- Because of the frequency of injection and the prevalence of backloading, access to sterile injection equipment is essential.
- For example: there are an estimated 15,000 IDU in King County.
- If we assume that 75% are heroin injectors, then 11,250 heroin injectors.

Injection issues cont' d

- 11,250 injectors x 3 injections per day x 300 days per year = 10,125,000 syringes per year.
- This is 6-7 million more syringes per year than the local syringe exchanges have averaged over the last decade.
- About 1/3 of what the **entire US** exchanged in 2012.

Behavioral issues

- There is a strong association between stimulant use and sex.
- Stimulant use tends to promote feelings of invulnerability and seriously impair judgment.
- Serious alcohol use is not uncommon among stimulant users, further impairing judgment and decision-making.
- So syringe access may not be the most important factor for this population.
- The same is true for female heroin users who engage in commercial sex work.

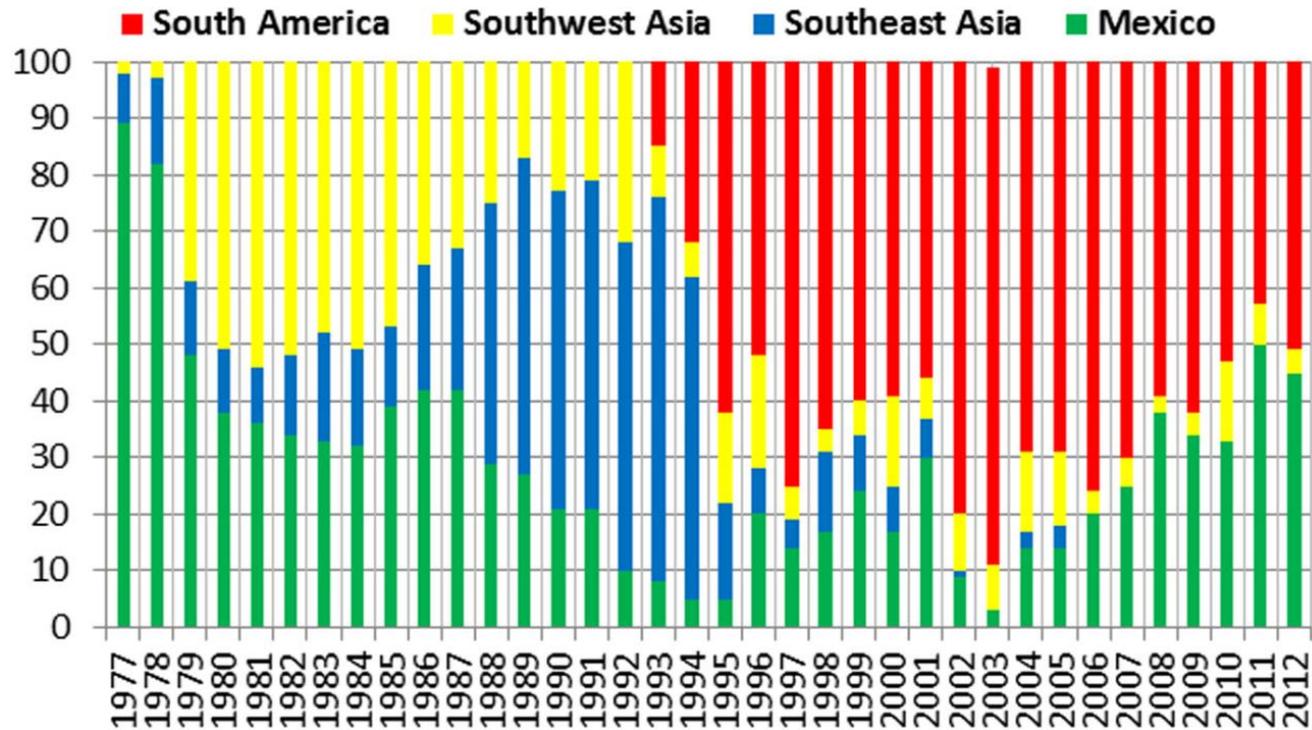
Recent(ish) trends

- Opioid use around the US steadily increasing over last several yrs.
- Heroin is a big story locally and nationally.
- Vermont gov, Suffolk County, Appalachia, here.
- Little doubt that a great deal of this represents shifting from pills to heroin.

Recent(ish) trends

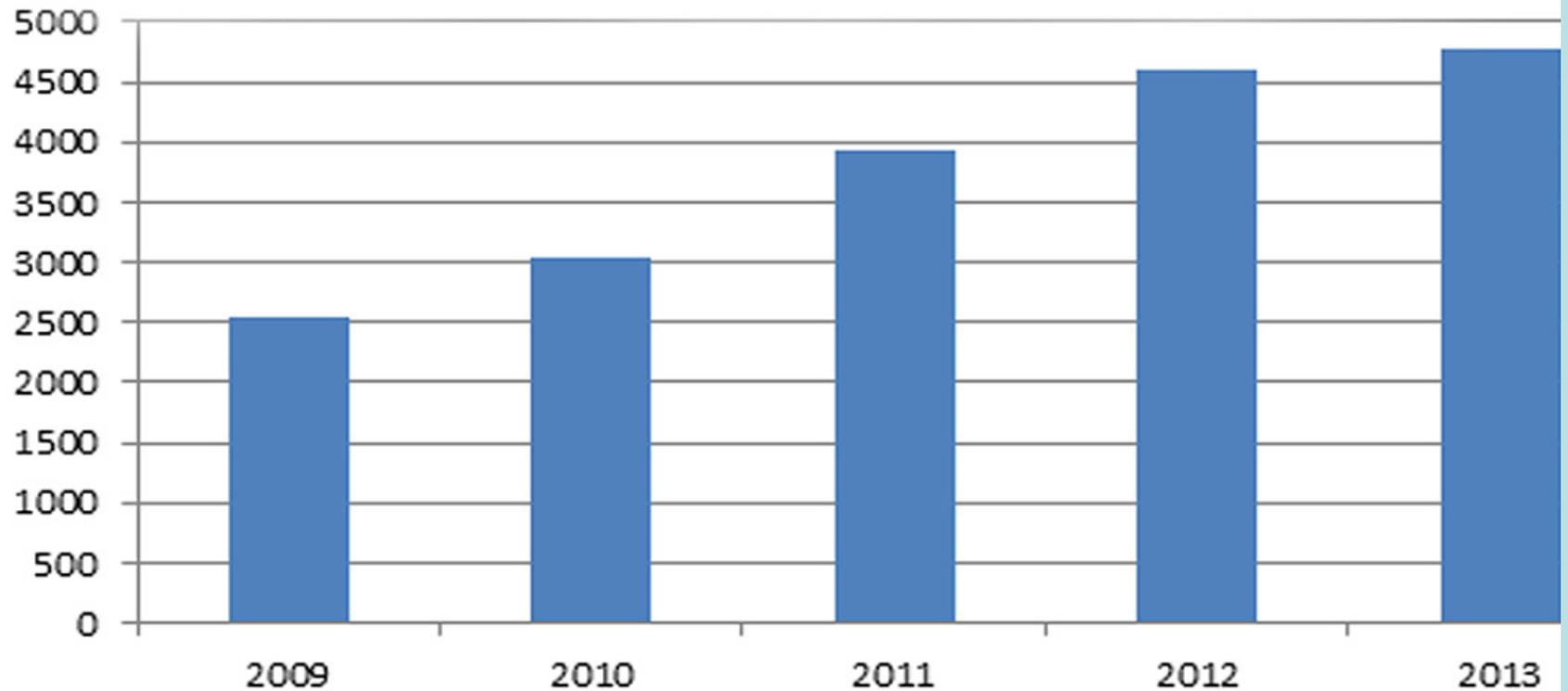
- But also true that a lot more heroin is coming in.
- Mexican cartels: major inroads on the east coast. S. American heroin > 50 %, but Mexican = 45%...way higher.

**Chart 4. Source of Origin for US Wholesale-level Heroin Seizures
1977 - 2012**



Source: Heroin Signature Program

**Chart 5. US Heroin Seizures
2009 - 2013**



Source: Natio

Recent(ish) trends

- Price ↓, purity ↑, drug seizures ↑↑
- This is also true for cocaine and methamphetamine.
- Really calls into question supply-side, interdiction based drug policy.

Recent(ish) trends

- ↑In heroin/opioid use, ↑in purity, has also meant a ↑in overdose.
- OD has been an issue for a long time.
- Really gained traction >2000.
- Narcan/naloxone and good Samaritan laws.

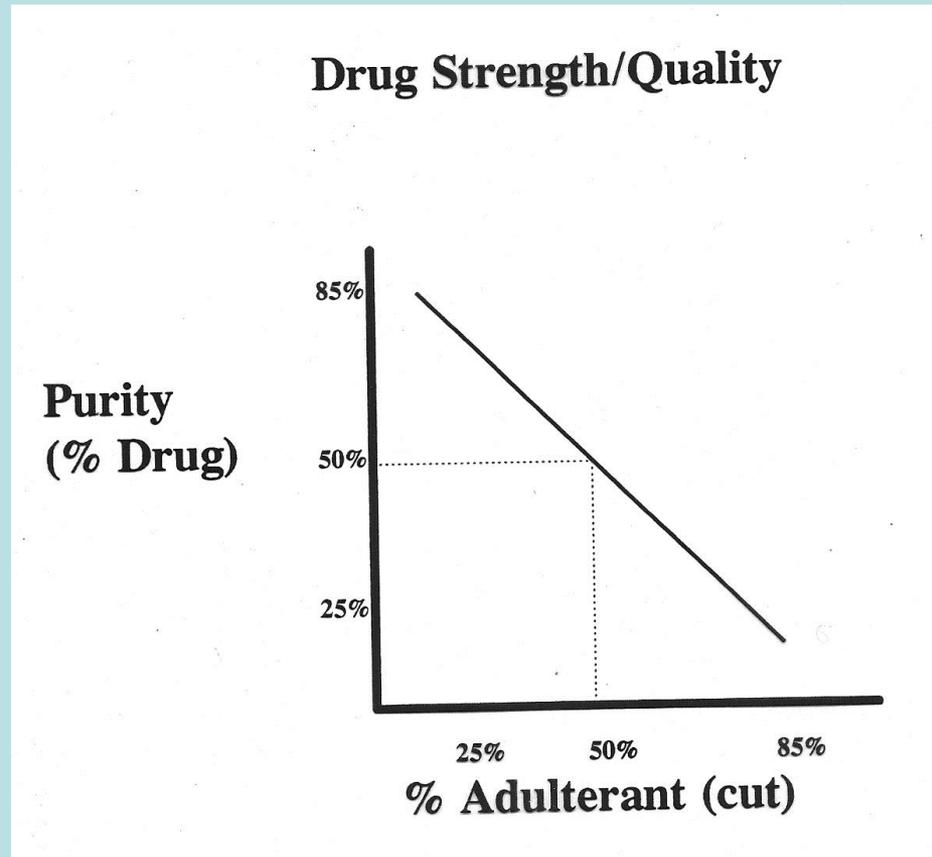
Recent(ish) trends

- New Mexico led way; CRA; DOPE, Project Lazarus.
- Now police all over.
- \approx 600 people in WA died from opioid OD in 2013.
- 6,668 died 2002-13.
- Why politics matters: a Seattle lesson.

Recent(ish) trends

- New changes to WA law.
- Doctors can now write RX to agencies to distribute naloxone.
- Any agency that serves folks who may be using opiates, should get naloxone for themselves and their clients/participants.

Drug Purity



Fentanyl

- Here? Not sure.
- Huge issue midwest/east coast.

Levamisole

- 91% of cocaine samples tested locally were (2011-12) positive for levamisole.
- Use seems to have fallen off since then.
- Potentially deadly.

Wound botulism

- Continues to be an issue for local heroin injectors.
- Alerts from PHSKC.
- Potentially deadly very rapidly.
- Swift care is imperative.

Harm Reduction

- Grew out of efforts to prevent HIV among injection drug users.
- First use of term began 27 years ago.
- Not a theory so much as philosophy/attitude.
- Although much HR practice is firmly theory based.

HR cont' d.

- Really based on common sense.
- And evidence.
- The NADR interviews.
- HR in practice.
- Huffing.

HR cont' d.

- Drug tx: methadone, buprenorphine.
- Syringe exchange.
- Safe injection sites.
- NAOMI.
- Legalization?

- The Netherlands and smoking heroin
- Narcan/naloxone (WA good Samaritan bill)